



Internet Genealogy

Separating the Trash from the Treasure

Diane Florence Gravel, CGSM
DianeGravel.com
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Framing Your Search

- Casting a wide net
- Narrow as appropriate
- Expect the unexpected!

Types of Websites

- Personal
- Educational
- Libraries
- Professional
- News
- Specialty
- Government
- Commercial

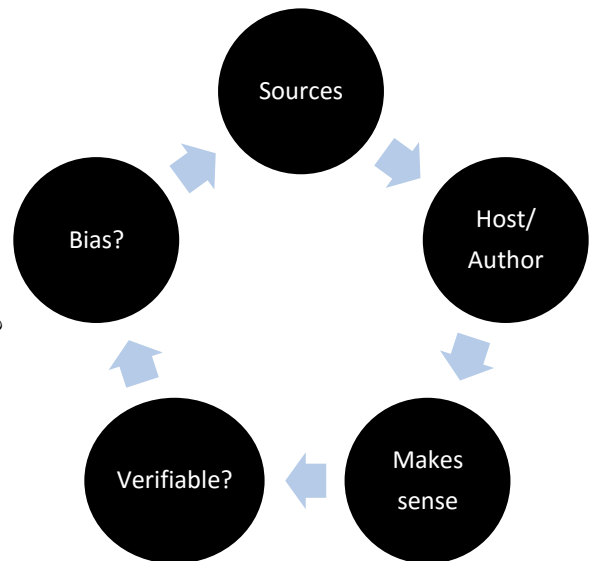
Applying Standards in the Search¹

- Scope of data-collection (Standard 19)
- Understanding meanings (Standard 24)
- Source analysis (Standard 35)
- Information analysis (Standard 36)
- Source preference (Standard 38)
- Information preference (Standard 39)
- Evidence mining (Standard 40)
- Evidence discrimination (Standard 42)
- Evidence integrity (Standard 43)
- Evidence reliability (Standard 44)

¹Board for Certification of Genealogists, *Genealogy Standards*, 50th Anniversary Edition (Washington, D.C.: Board for Certification of Genealogists, 2014).

Healthy Skepticism

- What/who led you to the site?
- What is the purpose of the site?
- Identifying the host
 - Deconstructing the web address
 - Decoding the domain
 - Alexa.com
- Is the host trustworthy?
 - Is the host/author identified?
 - Does the site provide contact information?
 - What are the host's credentials?
- Quality of the data
 - What is the author's objective?
 - Is the content biased?
 - Are sources cited?
 - Is the data verifiable?
 - Is the information current?
 - Do links work?
 - Does information make sense?
- Secure purchasing
(http://us.norton.com/yoursecurityresource/detail.jsp?aid=secure_shopping)



Sifting through the Trash for the Treasure

- Avoiding “Source Snobbery”¹
- Personal sites
- Collecting names
- Bad information in good sources
- Good information in bad sources



Online Trees: Truth or Wishful Thinking?

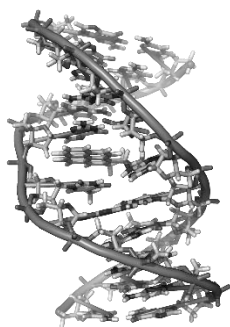
- Date consistency
- Does it make sense?
- Documentation
- Reliability
- Extracting clues

¹ Thomas W. Jones, PhD, CG, CGL, “Perils of Source Snobbery,” *OnBoard* 18 (May 2012); online, Board for Certification of Genealogists (<http://www.bcgcertification.org/skillbuilders/skbl135b.html> : accessed 31 January 2016).

Published Sources: Facts or Simply Clues?

- Analyzing content
- Applying the standards
- Google Books (www.books.google.com)
- The Internet Archive (www.archive.org)
- FamilySearch (<http://bit.ly/1xGANrl> or www.familysearch.org, click on books)
- Library of Congress, American Memory Collection (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>)

DNA Testing Sites



Use a company that is well-established in genealogical circles [e.g., Ancestry DNA www.dna.ancestry.com; Family Tree DNA www.familytreedna.com; 23andMe DNA www.23andme.com; National Geographic <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/> (more scientific than genealogical)].

Each site has helpful articles on the different types of testing. Judy Russell's blog post, "2015: Most Bang for the DNA Buck," is very helpful. <http://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/2015/02/02/2015-most-bang-for-the-dna-buck/>.

Sources for Further Study

Evaluating Websites

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- Virginia Montecino. "Criteria to Evaluate the Credibility of WWW Resources." *Education & Technology Resources*; online at George Mason University (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/web-eval-sites.htm> : accessed 31 January 2016).

Online Family Trees

“Family Trees: An Online Research Tool.” *FamilySearch Wiki*; online at FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Family_Trees:_An_Online_Research_Tool : accessed 1 February 2016).

Morgan, George G. “Beware of Online Family Trees.” *Internet Genealogy*, December/January 2016, pp. 7-11.

Standards

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National Genealogical Society. “Standards for Sound Genealogical Research.” 2002; online at National Genealogical Society (http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/galleries/Ref_Researching/gssound.pdf : accessed 1 February 2016).

National Genealogical Society. “Standards for Use of Technology in Genealogical Research.” 2002; online at National Genealogical Society (http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/galleries/Ref_Researching/gstechnology.pdf : accessed 1 February 2016).

More Sites and Sources

- “250+ Killer Digital Libraries and Archives.” Open Education Database (<http://oedb.org/ilibrarian/250-plus-killer-digital-libraries-and-archives/>).
- Ingle, Cyndi. “Internet Genealogy >> Cyndi’s Soapbox;” online at Cyndi’s List (<http://www.cyndislist.com/internet-genealogy/cyndis-soapbox/> : accessed 1 February 2016).
- *Internet Genealogy* (www.internet-genealogy.com). This magazine is published six times yearly, and is available in electronic or print format.